XIO3

1003 Amphion St.
Victoria, B.C.
CANADA V8S 4G2

March/April 1991

GARDEN CITY ATARI COMPUTER ENTHUSIASTS

Atari News and Rumours

by Rowland Grant

The range of Atari products exhibited at Comdex in the U.S. appeared again at the recent Pacific Rim Computer and Communications Show in Vancouver. Atari Canada had the largest display of any regular computer company. It was also considered by many as the best exhibit (and the loudest). Apple and Next computers had relatively small booths. Commodore was absent. The largest area was occupied by Toshiba, but not all of that was for computers. If the Atari TT030 and the MEGA STE are available now to dealers in Canada, it is a good time for Atari to push. Atari is promoting the business and work station potentials of the new models. Also Stacy is being promoted for the sound and entertainment industry, with some stage performance-demonstrations at the show. This time, cheers for Atari Canada.

There are some rumours about the TT030. It hasn't yet received class B (home use) certification in the U.S. One rumour says the FCC feels that it leaks too much video signal. There has been some speculation that this is due to the present case and the motherboard layout. Also it is rumoured that a new case design for the TT is in the works. Another rumour is that after getting Class A (business use) approval, Atari simplified the circuitry on the TT production model so much that the FCC required a complete retesting. I presume that Atari has not had much trouble with Canadian regulators and that TT030 sales here will continue. None of the new Atari stuff has appeared here in Victoria as yet. In fact there is very little ST hardware of any kind being displayed by dealers.

Dareck Mihocka, a Canadian programmer is known for his PD Atari 8-bit emulator for the ST (the Xformer). More recently he also did emulation programs allowing PC's to run Atari and Apple 8-bit software. With Ignac Kolenco, Dareck created an accelerator program for ST's, called Quick ST. He marketed an improved version of this through his company, Branch Always Software. A software speedup of the ST is possible because the GEM part of the operating system is written in compiled C code. Compiled code is seldom as compact or as efficient as code from direct assembly language programming. So by improving some of the time-dependent code in GEM, such as the text and graphics handling routines, some software can be made to run twice as fast. Dareck claims that even the TT030 cannot run GEM graphics any faster than a standard ST using Quick ST 2.

Dareck has now moved south of us in Washington. I understand that he is associated with Microsoft. (They have a good eye for talent.) However, in his spare time, Dareck continues to operate Branch Always Software (or Brasoft). This June, Brasoft promises to release a revised version, Quick ST 3.0. This speeds up more GEM routines than before, and adapts to the different hardware features (CPU, blitter chips etc) in different ST or TT models. If you are like me and spend far too much time fumbling around on desktop, Quick ST in whatever form looks like a must. One neat thing I noticed is that by mail they give you a $3 price reduction if you pay by money order. Group purchases of 5 or more copies reduces the price by another $4 per copy. And if you order in advance of release, before May 15th, you can deduct another $5. The list price is 34.95 (US) for Quick ST 3. There is no shipping charge in the U.S. or Canada. Branch Always Software, 14150 N.E. 20th Street, Unit 302, Bellevue, WA 98007 U.S.A.

Atari disk drives for XL/XE computers are no longer available new, and second hand drives are getting scarce too. Also most Atari drives will store no more than 130K per side as enhanced density. Some years back, you could get an ATR8000 drive interface (and a CPM computer thrown in) that allowed your Atari 800 to use generic drives of various sizes. In those good old days, an ATR8000 with 64K of RAM and two drives would have cost you more than a lower priced PC clone costs today. So why not use the drives on a cheap PC clone in the same way as the ATR8000? This occurred to Nick Kennedy in Arkansas. He has come up with a package entitled SIO2PC. It consists of a simple connecting cable and some elegant software.

The SIO2PC cable connects to the SIO port of your XL/XE either directly, or indirectly through your disk drives, interface etc. The other end of the cable connects to a RS-232 serial port on the PC. The software runs the PC and configures some or all of the PC's memory so that it appears to your Atari as four disk drives, D1: to D4:. Each of these RAM-drives can be set up as having 64K, 92K, 143K and 184K with a choice of 128 or 256 byte sectors. You use a DOS on your Atari to format these RAM-disks as required. Sparta DOS sounds like a good bet here. However, I would imagine that if you used DOS 2, four 92K drives would work. You can then use DOS to copy files or whole disks to the formatted RAM-disks in the PC.

(Continued on Page 2)

(Continued From Page 1)
Now you will want to save your Atari material to real PC drives. The SIO2PC software allows you to save each RAM-disk as a file on a regular PC disk. You should be able to squeeze four single density Atari disks as files on a regular PC floppy. To read these files, you copy them back to the PC RAM-disks. So if one of these files is an Atari disk containing DOS, you can copy it to the D1: RAM-disk and boot your XL/XE from the PC's RAM. In fact, except for copy protected software, you should be able to run your XL/XE off the PC drives alone. With SIO2PC available you should never run out of drives for your old 8-bit Atari.

The SIO2PC system also allows you to convert Atari files to IBM format files and back again. Your Atari can also use the PC's printer ports and screen display. My information comes second hand from various sources. For a first hand view, you can get the software and instructions as shareware for $10. A kit is $30 and an assembled, tested system is $50 (all in US funds). If you are interested, check the bulletin boards or send a money order to Nick Kennedy, 300 South Vancouver, Russelville, AR 72801, U.S.A.

The IBM emulators for the ST, namely Supercharger and PC Speed are announcing new models using the Intel 80286 microprocessor. This is a sign of the times in the PC world. There is an increasing amount of new software that will not run on the old 8088 chip. The 80286 is a 16/32 microprocessor like the Motorola 68000 in your ST. So the old PC's, though still useful, are becoming obsolete. In the coming years you should be able to get a used, early model PC at a very reasonable (low) price. This should make it attractive for 8-bit enthusiasts to use SIO2PC. I don't know if anyone has tried SIO2PC on a ST using an IBM emulator. Sounds like an interesting idea.

I noticed that a supplier of Atari PD software, Software Infinity, is advertising a series of new commercial XL/XE games. Apparently they are imported and sell under the KE-SOFT label. These games are said to be state of the art for animated graphics and sound. There are eleven games, but some are bundled two in a package. The prices range from $10.50 to $14.50 (US). Software Infinity, 642 East Waring Avenue, State College, PA 16801 U.S.A., charges $2.00 for its Atari 8-bit catalog. I understand that Bellcom, here in Canada, may add imported commercial software to its line of Atari PD software. There should be more information when Bellcom sends out its next catalog.

editorial

by Bob Nex

Most of you have heard this before, editing a newsletter is not as easy as it sounds. I have two people to thank for helping me get this issue out. I would like to thank Gordon Hooper for all his instruction on how to put this newsletter together. I would also like to thank John Picken for his help in setting up my copy of Paper Clip so editing this newsletter is not so difficult. As you may recall John put in some one hundred hours creating the XIO3 title you see on the front page. Well now he has put in some more time on all the titles you see throughout this newsletter. Thanks Gord and John.

With all of John's work the newsletter has taken on a new look. I now can print the newsletter, on my standard printer, without cutting and pasting titles. One exception would be a graphic picture that may be included from time to time. John created the titles with Daisy Dot III (as well as Text PRO for editing). To print a page I just have to use 2 passes on my printer one for text and one for titles. What this means is that the newsletter will be 100% printed.

WHEN ALL ELSE FAILS

Apparently several of our most enthusiastic game players have had trouble getting started in CAPTIVE, the latest dungeon type game. They had mastered DUNGEON MASTER, bearded CHAOS in his den and tramped all over castle BLOODWICH, but in CAPTIVE they couldn't get out of the first room that they got into. The instructions hint that some walls might be pushed aside, and in the first room, the end wall did seem to have rollers on it. However, running against the wall does nothing but damage your robots. After spending a couple of weeks exhausting every permutation and combination of every possibility the desperate players tried something completely unexpected. They re-read all the instructions very carefully. Then they realized that the familiar movement icons were not quite the same as DUNGEON MASTER and that a motion became a push by clicking the right mouse button. And after a few pushes, the back wall vanished to reveal tunnels full of nasty monsters.... ah, that's more like it!

by Rowland Grant

G.C.A.C.E. EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

PRESIDENT	386-0857	GORDON HOOPER	VICE-PRESIDENT	598-5564	JOHN PICKEN
SECRETARY	598-3661	ROWLAND GRANT	TREASURER	381-4198	MIKE HARRISON
EQUIPMENT MGR	479-6807	RON DE POL	8-BIT LIBRARIAN	652-0572	GEORGE ROSE
ST LIBRARIAN	385-5886	JOHN BRYDON	ST LIBRARIAN	478-8067	RON THIBODEAU
DIRECTOR	727-6173	TED SKRECKY	EDITOR XIO3	642-6358	BOB NEX

General Meetings

by Rowland Grant

The January general meeting was the official annual meeting. After some explanations we approved the following financial statement. This is a legal requirement for a registered society.

1990 FINANCIAL STATEMENT

Cash on hand Jan 1/90	6.35
Bank balance	312.90
Total funds Jan 1/90	319.25
INCOME	
Membership dues	1065.00
PSAN sales	268.00
Donations	120.00
Bank interest	1.84
Xerox copy sales	7.40
Miscellaneous	6.00
Total 1990 income	1468.24
EXPENDITURES	
Magazine purchases	42.06
PSAN purchases	301.67
Newsletter and printing	184.34
Postage	198.41
Room rental	270.00
Disks	75.35
Society Act report fee	15.00
Office supplies	56.16
Minolta copier repair	120.00
Copier supplies	102.23
Banking charges	19.50
Miscellaneous expenses	0.84
Total 1990 Expenditures	1385.56
Cash on hand Dec 31/90	0.00
Bank balance	401.93
Total year end funds	401.93

The follwing members were somehow encouraged to take part in managing the Club's affairs. Looks like the old executive reinforced by the return of John Picken and John Brydon. Welcome back!

Gordon Hooper	President
John Picken	Vice-president
Rowland Grant	Secretary
Mike Harrison	Treasurer
Ron De Pol	Equipment manager
Bob Nex	Editor
George Rose	Librarian
John Brydon	Librarian
Ron Thibodeau	Librarian
Ted Skrecky	Director

With all that out of the way, we got back to important things like socializing, selling old software, copying PD disks and the like.

We have received a copy of January START with disk. This seems to be a in lieu of our Analog subscription. Also Diablo Valley ACE in Diablo California have sent us a good looking newsletter. We will be keeping in touch with them. And we will be exchanging newsletters, disks etc with Club Cenacle in France. More about this club, will (maybe?) appear elsewhere in this newsletter. How come we are so popular? I suspect that our club listing In Don Bell's Bellcom 8-bit catalogue has alerted some Atari enthusiasts.

The February general meeting featured a video of upload and download procedures put together and narrated by Bob Nex. It was very informative, although I have a feeling that I didn't catch all of it. I hope that Bob will expand on this theme in future XIO3 articles. At any rate, as far as Pothole BBS is concerned, you should use the protocols F-modem, Y-modem or X-modem. Another video followed. This was a display of the recent ST game CAPTIVE. The video folowed the play through level zero and then jumped to the last bit of level ten. The CAPTIVE video was prepared by Sasha Grant who was unable to attend the meeting.

Ron Thibodeau announced that the ST library had reached disk number 40, and more are in the works. I should comment that everything in the library is reviewed and catalogued. Not everything that comes before our librarians is considered acceptable, or worth keeping. This is a perogative of the librarians. Without this process we could quickly assemble a ST library with hundreds of disks of little value. While helping Ron with disk preparation, Ted Skrecky's system was stricken with the infamous mouse reversal virus. He had to disinfect about twenty disks before it was eradicated. We believe that all our PD disks are virus free, but you can never be too careful. Thanks to Bob and Sasha for their video displays, and thanks to all those who brought their equipment.

The Pothole B.B.S. 604-642-6795

THE OFFICIAL BOARD OF GARDEN CITY ATARI COMPUTER ENTHUSIASTS

SIGS FOR: ATARI 8-BIT, ATARI ST/MEGA, AND IBM (CLONES)

SYSOP: BOOMER 300 * 1200 * 2400 BAUD COSYSOP: BIG BROTHER

CLUB CENACAL ATARI

Club Cenacle is an Atari user group representing and serving XL/XE owners thoughout France. It is based in Sannois, just outside Paris. In France, commercial support for Atari 8-bit computers has declined to the vanishing point over the last few years. Club Cenacle was formed three years ago to keep the XL/XE line alive in France.

Club Cenacle reaches its members through its impressive newsletter, CENACLE-NEWS XL/XE. This runs about thirty pages or more per issue number. It appears in April, July and November, although sometimes two issue numbers are combined. A disk of software accompanies each issue. To keep members informed between times, a smaller newsletter called NEWSQUICK is sent out. Club Cenacle also seems to run a bulletin board, at least I assume from the context that "serveur-minitel" means bulletin board.

Club Cenacle keeps a disk library and has published a catalog which it distributed with NEWSQUICK. A member can get selected program files by sending a formatted disk and a stamp with his request. In addition, the Club sells complete public domain software disks such as TuboBASIC, Daisy-Dot and so on. In some instances it has translated the instructions into French. Also, translated instructions are sold separately for a number of North American commercial games and utilities.

Club Cenacle members are kept informed about the remaining sources of Atari hardware. Also the Club has organized group purchases of computer accessories in Britain and possibly in the U.S. They have found it difficult. One item that is in demand is a parallel printer connection for Atari 8-bits. No doubt this is a sign of the declining prices of parallel printers in France and the increasing use of Epson compatibles.

The pages of CENACLE-NEWS April 1990 look like they have been photo-reduced to half size. This helps cut postage expense and creates a handsome booklet. The newsletter begins with an editorial. This is followed by a section where answers are given to various technical questions sent in by members. After all, this is a club that operates through the mail. Members can't attend a monthly meeting and discuss their computer questions informally. There are six "programmeurs" on the editorial board, and these persons field most of the questions.

Then there are a number of interesting technical articles. There are also articles that document the software that is on the accompanying disk. The April 1990 CENACLE-NEWS is a double issue with two disks. Some of this software is original (and it looks very good too). Some software comes from magazine listings that members have typed in and donated to the club. There are also several complete translations of magazine articles. The feature topic of issue 7/8 seems to be on printers. So naturally one of the translations is of Charles E. Johnson's great 6: utility from Analog 35. CENACLE-NEWS winds up with a series of shorter articles, reviews and game hints. It is all very impressive.

Much of this work seems to have been accomplished by a relatively small number of persons. (See? It's the same the whole world over.) Michel Breton, who serves as director of CENACLE-NEWS and editor in chief of NEWSQUICK has contacted us and invited our participation in Club Cenacle. So, if you have some thoughts about your 8-bit Atari that you would like to share with our friends in France, just jot it down en francais. Then send it with a covering letter and your text file on disk, to Club Cenacle, B.P. 49, 95110 SANNOIS FRANCE. Oh yes, according to my copy of Petit Larousse, one meaning of Cenacle is a gathering of talented persons who share a common interest. That they are!

by Rowland Grant

MODULA-3

With the advent of object oriented C++ both C and Modula-2 have become obsolete. In the case of C there is little loss. Burdened with an incoherent syntax and handicapped by slow compilers there has been little to like about C. It comes as no surprise that basic, which suffers from neither of these limitations has become the most widely used language. As an example of C's poor syntactical choices compare the basic statement "For Count%=1 to 10 .... Next Count%" with the C equivalent "int count for (count=1;count<=10;++count) ....". The continued existence of C has been due entirely to its high degree of standardization; an area that basic has thus far been lagging in.

Thus professional programmers seeking a high degree of standardization so their programs can be easily ported to a variety of computer makes have settled on C++. This language is also handicapped by an poor syntax since a high degree of compatibility with C was a marketing necessity. The only computer language that is both easy to read and is standardized enough to be a possible competitor to C++ is Digital Research's Modula-3.

I have recently receive two reports totaling 117 pages on Modula-3 from Digital Research. I am happy to report that Modula-3 resembles easy to read Pascal or basic. However like C++ it also comes with yummy things like object oriented programing constructs, low level bit oriented routines as well as separately compilable "modules". As far as brute power goes it weights in as being slightly heavier than C++. Reading the reports was quite a mental exercise as concepts like partially opaque data types do take some explaining.

Currently Modula-3 is available as a freeware Modula-3

(Continued on Page 5)

(Continued From Page 4)

to C translator on a wide variety of systems including the IBM PC, IBM R6000, HP9000, VAX, DECstation and SPARCstation. The language unfortunately requires 34 megabytes of hard disk space to install. If Modula-3 becomes popular smaller and more efficient Modula-3 compilers and interpreters should become available for a wide variety of systems, including the Atari ST. Modula-3 gets my vote.

by Douglas Skrecky

Peeking Around

by Gordon Hooper

... JOHN PICKEN working on the GCACE advertising brochure which is distributed at Tesseract and A&B Sound to attract new members to our favourite club ... GEORGE ROSE moving all the eight-bit library public domain disks and magazines to his house. Phone George at 652-0572 to make an appointment to visit him and get disks or borrow magazines. Also, George along with RON DE POL, RON BRACKENRIDGE, MICHAEL HARRISON and assorted others are now officially an eight-bit special interest group. Phone George for the meeting day for this SIG, which delves into different arcane areas of eight-bit computer knowledge ... Our Secretary, ROWLAND GRANT, has received a letter from an Atari club in France asking for an exchange of newsletters and swaps of eight-bit software. Rowland understands French, so he agreed to correspond with them. (His wife TANYA will make corrections of grammar and spelling for him) ... BOB NEX finding out that making a newsletter ain't as easy as it looks. Ha Ha ... Be sure and phone GORD at 386-0857 with any bits of privileged information other members would be embarassed to see in print ...

G.C.A.C.E. Library News

Atari 8-Bit

G.C.A.C.E. has a library available to members. There are Antic, Analog, Byte, Compute, Page 6 and softside disks and magazines that may be borrowed. We also have programing and technical books as well.
George (the 8-bit libarian) will copy any 8-bit disks that you may want.There are lots of games and utilities available for the asking.
He works an unusual shift, so the best time to call him is Before 6PM
George will be having another open house on April 7 10:00AM to 3:00PM at his Home, Although he can only supply 8-bit software all members are welcome. The address is 7972 Galbraith Cresc. Sannichton.

COMING EVENTS

COMING EVENTS
COMING EVENTS
COMING EVENTS
COMING EVENTS
COMING EVENTS

Next general meeting is on March 21, the april meeting will be held on April 18, at the Sannich Library from 7:00 to 9:00 PM. The March meeting topics will be disk drives, how to service and maintain your 8-bit drives. The ST will have demos (as well as general information from the drive topic). The April meeting topics will be printer graphics and demos of graphic programs like Daisy Dot III. If you have any ideas for a meeting topic, you should mention it at the next general meeting.

The executive meeting dates are April 4 and May 2.
See you there Ron?

The deadline for the May June issue of XIO 3 is May 2. (you may upload the text to the Pothole BBS.)

There is a library meet at George Rose's house on April 7 (Sunday) from 10 to 3. His address is 7972 Galbraith Cresc. See you there.

I know this is not a comming event. Dues are Still only $25 per year. You may pay at the General meeting, contact Gordon Hooper (our prez) at 386-0857 or one of the Executive.

XL XE KEYBOARD FIX

There may come a time when your trusty 800XL or your 130XE may not respond to your typing one or more characters to the screen. If this should happen to you, asitdidtomenottoolongago,youmaywantto
attempt to correct the problem yourself. I found the repair to be easy and it gave me great satisfaction when it worked the first time and has continue to do so. The money I saved and the confidence the work has given me are additional benifits.

Few tools are needed, but a multi meter is a must. Under the keys sits a plastic sheet that containes a number tracing (paths for the electrical to travel). A break or crack in these tracings will cause your keyboard to malfunction. It may not be apparent on visual examination and thats why a multi meter is needed. Your setting to test for continuity is important as a wrong resistance setting

(Continued on page 8)

FUSTRATIONS

The word "computer" has a synonym: "frustration". These two words can be used interchangeably, the same as "politician" and "liar".

I made this monumental discovery after I had been writing an article. I had written about 2,000 words when I got an inspiration for another story, and decided to start writing it immediately. After all, this was why I was using a word processor rather than a typewriter. I pushed the keys to delete the screen I was working on, and the computer quite correctly asked me if I was sure I wanted to delete this. Of course I was, or I wouldn't have asked the miserable machine to do it in the first place.

It was exactly one nanosecond after I pushed the return key to delete my immortal words that I thought, "Did I save it to disk?" We all know the answer: "Of course not, you bumbling fool of a brain-rotted idiot!" Actually, the words I used were considerably more colourful than that, but this publication has standards which I unfortunately lack.

How many times has your computer locked up? This has the same effect as deleting files because you have to reboot to continue. And we all know that we haven't saved the file to disk as in the previous example, so we're back at square one again: all of our work has been sent to Alice, happily conversing with the Mad Hatter down in Wonderland.

This has been the story of my life with a computer. One of abject bafflement. I feel like I have all the intelligence of a hockey goalie who habitually plays without a helmet. He will eventually look down to find his brain laying on the ice like a drunken pancake. Unfortunately, I'm a writer, so it would be an especially sodden pancake.

I recently purchased an art/graphics program which the reviews said was supposed to be the ultimate in this line for $249.99. I eagerly went home, booted it up, and waited for the program to turn me into Michelangelo. It turns out that the computer and program combined couldn't draw as much as a straight line. I was expected to read the docs, manipulate the computer and then draw something. The problem here lies in the fact that even with a pencil I can only draw stick figures. The computer in no way was going to turn me into an accomplished portraitist through some arcane process. It seems I would have had to practice for untold hours before I would have any prowess in art at all. I could have spent that time with a pencil for under a dollar, instead of the obscene amount I paid for the computer and program. I would have ended up in the same place but with the money in my pocket, instead of in the computer salesman's grubby little hands.

Another problem with computers is that everytime you pay for a component, that action automatically triggers a price cut of at least seventy-five percent exactly one week after the salesman pries the hard-earned money out of your grasping hands. You have to imbed in your mind that the fact an electronic item is offered for sale in stores means it is outdated. Actually, they are already manufacturing the next generation of the item before it even arrives in the store for sale. You are always one step behind the manufacturers no matter how quickly you buy the item when it's first offered for sale. Trying to play catch up with electronic items is as futile as trying to build a pig out of pork chops.

Even when you quit working on your computer and start playing games, the level of frustration doesn't diminish. Have you ever played a shoot-em-up arcade game and advanced to the highest level? I thought not. How about a text adventure game? The only conclusion I reach in those games is that I must have been brain dead all my life because after I've used up "Go north, south, east or west", I'm finished.

Another way to drive yourself to distraction is to try to isolate one component of your hardware and attempt to remove it, whether it be for repair or to demonstrate at a user's group meeting. The rat's nest of wires behind your desk which is required to operate the computer and its' peripherals is enough to send you babbling to the local establishment which serves to contain those individuals whose sense of reality tends to require extensive downsizing of the head.

Modems have the capability of setting up their own particular forms of Hell. Terminal programs have various items that you have to set for each individual BBS that you wish to use. Things like parity, translation, duplex and baud rate all must coincide or you might as well switch to collecting dinner plates as a hobby for all the enjoyment you'll get out of BBS's. You'll soon learn not to enter into "chat" mode with the Sysop's of long distance boards or you'll get phone bills that would make the Emir of an oil-rich Arab state gulp a couple of times. A neophyte on BBS's should also be warned about leaving nasty messages to other people on message bases while hiding behind a psuedo. Sooner or later the sysop of the board will tell the other people who you are, and then you will be looking over your shoulder every time you go outdoors.

Looking at the overall picture, computers are marvelous machines which make life much easier in many ways. People who purchase one and expect everything to be a bed of roses, however, tend to be those who really believe that the cheque is in the mail and Dorothy really met the 'ol Oz.

by Gordon Hooper

PERSONAL PUBLISHING (Almost) ON YOUR ATARI 8-BIT

by John Picken

This issue of XIO3 was produced using several programs. First, of course, the justified and microspaced text columns are printed using PaperClip (PC). I have yet to encounter a better, 8-bit word processor for two column work: First, both columns are printed at once so there is no requirement to back up the paper and to align (hopefully) the second column with the first. Second, PC's screen preview approaches WYSIWYG (what you see is what you get) and saves considerable time and paper.

PC, however, lacks many features which are definitely needed for our 8-bit approach to desktop publishing. While printer graphics are available using custom CNF's, each time we change editor we have to come up with new CNF's and techniques for use with the new editor's printer. Recently, after perusing the manual for Bob's venerable Seikosha, I managed to produce a CNF that would allow graphics or italics but not both. There were other difficulties involved: to get graphics, I had to use the PC Italics commands which do not respect margins.

Then, to make life interesting, Bob bought a new Star NX1001. Another CNF! At least the new machine allowed access to both graphics and italics and had control sequences similar to my Raven. But then, in strolled Murphy. Neither of Bob's printers has a 15 character per inch pitch. I don't have to tell you what pitch I used extensively in all the graphics and titles for Gord.

I decided the best way to go was to use Daisy-Dot III (DD) to produce a completely new set of titles. This latest DD incarnation is a vast improvement over previous versions. Aside from larger fonts, it allows output to disk file and the files produced can be used as "Verbatim Files" with PC.

Of course, DD did not come with a font to produce box outline characters so the first step was to learn how to use the font editor (FE.COM) and produce one. The editor and the font utilities programs (FU.COM) were also used to modify some of the existing fonts. All three DD programs are large and complex so a lot of time was spent on trial and error discovering undocumented quirks. Example one: none of the programs will run under SpartaDOS 3.2 if the time-date line is installed. Example two: my printer, interface, computer combination does not agree with FE.COM attempts to print resulted in lockup.

The combination of programs which yielded best results was TextPro 4.54 (TP), the DD programs, and either MyDOS 4.5 or SpartaDOS 3.2. The size of the programs makes a large RAMdisk a necessity if you want to avoid a lot of thumb twiddling watching the busy light on the drive.

One of the beauties of TP is its powerful macro facility. There are a large number of DD commands and I found it easiest to place all of them in a macro. A macro with a "pop-up" help screen saves a lot of time looking up required commands and formats. Anyway, once set up, the fun is just beginning. The process of designing a title file starts in TP where you write the text, select the font(s) you want to use and insert the DD commands. Once this is done, you save the source file, exit to DOS, and run the print processor (PP.COM) to try it out. Here again, working from RAMdisk is almost a necessity especially if you're using multiple fonts.

I'd be willing to bet that 95% of the time you'll be going back to TP to edit the source file before trying it out again (and again and again). When you finally get the results you want, you redirect the DD output to a disk file. Make sure you've got lots of room! These files are really large—the title file for this page occupies 71 single density sectors yet its source file requires only one.

One optional final step is involved before you boot PC: You load the actual graphic file into TP and adjust the line feeds to come out to an exact number of lines. This way you can hold places for titles in your PC page using simple carriage returns. At this stage you can even edit some of the printer sequences for varying effects. The "Coming Events" file was produced by editing each graphics line to change density.

Printing a complete page with PC is a two stage operation. Either text or titles can be printed first. In both cases, the appropriate number of blank lines must be left for the other file. Once you've completed one stage, the paper must be backed up to the original starting point for the other stage (mark the paper edging).

What about margins and columns? I found that the simplest way was to leave all DD margins at zero and adjust the line length to match the column width. With PC, the left margin is also set to zero. Horizontal placement on the page is then controlled using short verbatim files to set and re-set the printer's left margin as required.

All of this sounds complex—it is but the complexity is not insurmountable. If you're willing to invest the time results can be excellent. Of course, once you have the files, future operations get progressively easier and, with experience, the results improve. I encourage those interested to give it a try. Advice on PC, TP, DD, and DOS is available from several members. Copies of my macro and help file may be obtained from Bob or myself.

XL XE KEYBOARD FIX

(Continued from page 5)

may fail to find your problem. In my case a high setting (1000 or more) found a weak area, whereas a low setting (100 or less) indicated a circuit that was intact. A small amount of electricity can flow but not enough to generate a response from the computers operating system. When testing for continuity use a very sharp probe (I used a needle) and move along the trace from under the key that doesn't work to the tab end that connects to the main computer board. Note: The tab end of the plastic keyboard membrane does not have a connector piece attached, it should be gently pull out of a black connector attached to the main board, before doing your tests. The back side of the membrane will show the trace to be a mirror like silver line, this may on very close examination show a slight dull area where a restriction to the flow of electrons is occurring, your probing on the other side will verify it. Upon finding the damaged area very lightly scrape the trace with a sharp knife only to clean it. don't remove much of this dull looking trace. You can also use some alcohol to clean the area.

A product called "nickel Print" was used to rebuild the weak trace. It comes in a 59ml bottle and is priced around $10.00. Most electronic shops Should carry it. The amount you will use is very small and your bottle will last for 1000's of repairs. You will encounter great difficulties if you decide to use the 5mm brush that is attached to the cap, it is far to wide for most repairs and you will short out circuits. I found that by using a needle I could load up just the right amount nickel to complete the fix.
Test your repair before reassembling and you should be on your way to a happy resumption of "Computer Time".

by Ron De Pol

ONLINE!

I will start off this column with an introduction of Cbentrenet. This is a 'BBS' that I gained access through Inet 2000. Cbentrenet (or CB) is geared for the home computer user that wants access to software for their computer. When you call you can download software, play games or CHAT with users from across Canada. The chat function is what most users end up spending their time on, and reminds me of D-dial which can be found here in Victoria. I first spent most of my time, on Cbentrenet, downloading software, but have moved on to the chat function of the board. I was able to renew an old friendship through this function as CB is located in Ottawa, where he lives. In the past month I have used this 'board' to keep in touch with him. Just one more of the uses I have found for computing.

Well onto BBS'ing. I have not had a chance to do much local dialing in the past few months so I am not up on the latest Non-Atari boards. I have been calling the two local boards in town, and typing on my own (The Pothole BBS). The other two are The Nut House, which is running the old version off Express BBS, and 8-bit Arc (run by GCACE Treasurer Mike Harrison), which just switched to BBS Express Pro! Since 'Pro' supports 'Net Mail' I have started to exchange Mail with 8-bit Arc. Net mail is system of exchanging messages between two or more BBS systems (much like the Fido net is set up). The boards exchange packets at selected times, usually during the early morning when things are not busy. One problem that net mail (on the Atari) is that you can not send private mail to users on the other boards, but even with this limitation Net mail can be vary useful. The net mail will help people that live in Sidney, and other long distance locations, keep in contact with people here in Sooke. If you own a modem or are thinking of buying one, then by all means join in on the 'cross town talk that is happening on atari BBS'S.

Talking about messages and entering them here is a short tutorial that may help you enter messages on the BBS's that you may call. Messaging is a hard concept for the novice and experienced computer/modem user to understand. On most boards, if you get into 'trouble' just a press the question mark key should get you some sort of menu (on 'Pro' you press '/?' key combination to get a the menu). Saving a message is usually straight forward, but you can look for a 'S' in the menu and that should be SAVE. Editing can be a bit cumbersome, those who have had experienced on the atari's full screen editor will know that it is a real pain to re-enter a line of text for just one mistake. Pro has a solution to the problem, in the 'edit a line' mode, if you press 'Control L' you will see the first (or next) letter in your message re-appear on your edit line. If you press 'control W' an entire word will re-appear on your edit line. When you get to the word or area of the line hat need fixing just type in the correction, then continue with 'control L or W to complete the line. Once discovered, this little trick can be a real time saver. Look for this or some sort of command like it on BBS programs other than Pro!

I will end this column with a short explanation of features on my board. I have files which includes files for the atari computers as well as IBM and Commodore 64 (the commodore files allow them to play some of the games). One of the busiest sections of the board is the games, which I have about 30 various games that users can play. There are solo games (Eg. Prozee and Wheel of fortune) as well as multi-player (Eg. Arena and NEBULA). I also have 13 message bases, as you might have guessed, that have topics from buy sell, to Star Trek. That is a real quick over view of my BBS.

Hopefully I will have a chance to make a few calls in the next few months and get back to you with a report on some of the other boards in the local area. The Phone number for the 8-bit arc is 380-7957. See you online!

G.C.A.C.E. MEMBERSHIP LIST

G.C.A.C.E. MEMBERSHIP FOR MARCH 1991

1.	Bacon	Dave	477-3709	3700 Epson Drive	Victoria	B.C.	V8P 3S7	oct91
2.	Baird	Matt	382-5964	33 - 3498 Lovat Avenue	Victoria	B.C.	V8X 1V2	feb91
3.	Baker	Gary	727-9367	972 McBriar Ave.	Victoria	B.C.	V8X 3M2	nov91
4.	Barr	Glenn	383-5484	1360 Lyall Street	Victoria	B.C.	V9A 5H8	mar91
5.	Brackenridge	Ron	625-2199	6768 Jedora Drive	R.R.1 Brentwood	B.C.	V0S 1A0	jan92
6.	Brydon	John	385-5886	532 Dunedin St.	Victoria	B.C.	V8T 2L8	jan92
7.	Corner	Steve	595-4975	3261 Doncaster Drive	Victoria	B.C.	V8P 3V6	feb91
8.	DeGreef	James	474-1664	154 Milburn Drive	Victoria	B.C.	V9C 1T8	feb91
9.	De Pol	Ron	479-6807	5751 Wallace Drive	R.R.5 Victoria	B.C.	V8X 4M6	jan92
10.	Dey	Rob & Dia	478-6626	2775 Lakehurst Drive	Victoria	B.C.	V9B 4S4	aug91
11.	Ellison	Peter	721-5389	P.O. Box 5852 Stn B	Victoria	B.C.	V8R 6S8	may91
12.	Espley	John & Carrie	361-4972	#106-3420 Quadra Street	Victoria	B.C.		oct91
13.	Etheridge	Bob	479-7271	320 Viaduct Avenue W.	Victoria	B.C.	V8X 3X1	sep91
14.	Faulkner	Karen	727-6698	4143 Birtles Avenue	Victoria	B.C.	V8Z 3Z3	aug91
15.	Ferguson	Dan	385-2945	Apt.C 1157 Johnson Street	Victoria	B.C.	V8V 3N9	oct91
16.	Grant	Rowland	598-3661	1003 Amphion St.	Victoria	B.C.	V8S 4G2	jan92
17.	Grieg	Alan	656-4314	2089 Vallis Place	Sidney	B.C.	V8L 2L3	may91
18.	Harrison	Michael	381-4198	1135 Mason Street	Victoria	B.C.	V8T 1A5	jul91
19.	Henmiga	Vickey	382-5412	C/O 111 Superior Street	Victoria	B.C.	V8V 2K6	jul91
20.	Hevesi	Jerry	384-7354	#20-992 Gorge Road West	Victoria	B.C.	V9A 1P2	aug91
21.	Hooper	Gordon	386-0857	253 Regina Ave	Victoria	B.C.	V8Z 1J6	jan92
22.	Hunt	James	479-8064	#38-4125 Interurban Road	Victoria	B.C.		may91
23.	Lachapelle	Wayne	656-6799	10046 Wisteria Place	Sidney	B.C.	V8L 4E7	may91
24.	Lemmen	Steven	595-7811	2875 Queenston St.	Victoria	B.C.	V8R 4P4	jan92
25.	Loader	Clive	477-8212	4438 Fieldmont Court	Victoria	B.C.	V8N 4Z2	oct91
26.	Lovering	Ken	474-7715	2513 Duncan Place	Victoria	B.C.	V7B 3P2	may91
27.	Mullins	Gary	384-8592	1215 Carisle Ave.	Victoria	B.C.	V9A 5C7	nov91
28.	Nex	Bob	642-6358	P.O.Box 1168	Sooke	B.C.	V0S 1N0	mar91
29.	Opdahl	Harlow	386-0510	2571 Vancouver Street	Victoria	B.C.	V8T 4A6	feb91
30.	Perrett	Stephen	652-3943	1961 Hovey Road	Saanichton	B.C.	V0S 1M0	feb91
31.	Picken	John	598-5564	2214 Belmont Avenue	Victoria	B.C.	V8R 3Z8	apr91
32.	Rose	George	652-0572	7972 Galbraith Cresc.	RR1 Saanichton	B.C.	V0S 1M0	apr91
33.	Shaneman	John	386-2109	3026 Fifth Street	Victoria	B.C.	V8T 4B7	feb91
34.	Sim	M.	384-8150	913 Yarrow Place	Victoria	B.C.	V9A 7J1	jan92
35.	Sims	Frank	389-0629	#3-306 Edward Street	Victoria	B.C.	V8A 3E6	jun91
36.	Skrecky	Ted	598-6173	#508-1745 Leighton Road	Victoria	B.C.	V8R 6R6	jan92
37.	Skrecky	Doug	669-4825	#201-1555 Harwood Street	Vancouver	B.C.	V6G 1X	nov91
38.	Smotch	Tony	652-5573	2401 Keating Crossroad	Victoria	B.C.		jan92
39.	Thibodeau	Ron	658-4518	5199 Walema Court	Victoria	B.C.	V8Y 2T7	jan92
40.	Williams	Caroline	389-0358	no forwarding address				feb91
41.	Williams	Dave & Margaret	592-5147	1012 Redfern Street	Victoria	B.C.	V8S 4G1	oct91
42.	Young	Albert	598-5611	102-1418 Newport Avenue	Victoria	B.C.	V8S 5E9	jan92
43.	Zotzman	Doug	380-1471	2888 Fifth Street	Victoria	B.C.	V8T 4B2	oct91

The 8-Bit Arc Mail Order Co.

#100-3749 SHELBOURNE STREET, P.O. BOX 32008, VICTORIA, B.C., V8P 5S2

* 8-BIT IN STOCK SPECIALS *

*

* Silent Service *

* Conflict In Vietnam *

* F-15 Strike Eagle *

* Top Gunner Collection *

*

$12.95 plus taxes

while stock lasts!

Your Canadian Atari 8-Bit Resource